THE ARCHITECTURAL MUSEUM, CANON-ROW, WESTMINSTER.

Having long ago urged the importance of forming a national Museum of Architecture, we can but be glad to hear of the steps which are being taken by the committee appointed some time ago with that end in view. Every one who has been practically engaged in architecture must have felt the need of a collection of casts from the best ancient works of ornamental sculpture, statues, and other objects not capable of being readily or sufficiently represented by drawings. Even if an architect can spare time for frequently travelling from one monument of ancient art to another, which none of us can do to such an extent as we ought, he still needs, when at home, the aid of casts to recal the richer portions of the details to his memory, and he needs them to be arranged in such a manner as to enable him to compare the corresponding features of the different works he has visited. This necessity is also greatly increased by the fact, that the majority of objects which an architect has ordinarily before his eyes, are calculated to corrupt his taste and to deaden his feelings, so that good taste and warmth of feeling in art, are only to be obtained by some stimulant constantly at hand, to compensate for and correct the effect of these adverse agents.

It is quite true that *nature* is the true refuge from the chilling effects of bad and degenerate art; but she has been so long neglected, that we want the example of better times to show us how to use her. At Cologne cathedral, for instance, they compose their ornamental foliage by joint reference to casts from ancient carving and casts from natural leaves: the manner in which they thus learn to use natural objects with such conventionalities as are necessary to adapt them to their situations and to the material made use of, is instructive.

If, however, such a collection as that which we advocate is necessary to *architects*, who have frequent opportunities of visiting original works, how much more is it necessary to the workman who has no such opportunity, and is nevertheless expected to produce works in the same spirit as those which he has rarely, if ever, seen, and who is held up to ridicule if his works fall short in merit of those of artists of the best times.

It is by familiarising their eyes and their minds to fine works that real improvement in the taste of our carvers and decorators may be expected. A workman cannot, however, afford the loss of time and wages, much less the actual outlay, requisite to visiting ancient works, unless close at hand; and employers will very rarely aid him in doing so. Even if this were always practicable, we should still consider the Museum of Casts a necessary adjunct, for the same reasons which we have for its being so to an *architect*. The work, *in its place*, will undoubtedly inspire the noblest sentiment, and will show the propriety of ornament to its position, but the collection of casts is after all the object for constant reference and study, the continual reminder of what has been seen *in situ*, but cannot be visited again. It would be our wish to add to such a Museum, a large collection of casts from natural foliage; nature containing the first principles upon which, though not rejecting necessary conventionalism, we must ever be falling back.

The great difficulty to be met in the formation of such a Museum by individuals arises from the costliness of premises necessary for the object, particularly if in a central position. The committee *have, however, resolved to make a beginning*, though humble, and have taken two or three rooms in Canon-row, approached from Parliament-street. The rooms are of a very rough description, but they have this recommendation, that they will hold a great many casts, and are capable of periodical extension, as the income and collection increase. What they now want is to secure widely extended support, both by annual subscriptions and by donations of casts. When they have funds sufficient, they will endeavour to obtain casts from abroad.

Among the works already contributed are by Mr. G. G. Scott, a fine collection from Ely and the Chapter House, Westminster; Mr. Scoles's casts from Athens and Rome, taken under his inspection while there, the whole of these belonging to the Ecclesiological Society; some fine casts moulded under the superintendence of Mr C. R. Cockerell, R.A.; a noble Greek head from the Louvre, others from Canterbury, by Mr. W. Burgis; from St. Mary's, Reading, by Mr. A. Billing; from Windsor, by Mr. S. Cundy; some panels by Mr. J. L. Pearson, from Wells, &c. by Mr. B. Ferrey; also from Mr. S. Clarke; some fine ironwork from Mr. P. C. Hardwick; the Messrs. Hakewell, Richardson, White, Nash, have been contributors: some have also been secured from the Cottingham collection; and Mr. J. Ruskin has kindly promised some noble specimens of Venitian art taken under his personal inspection.

On the amount of annual subscriptions and donations of casts, depends the whole success of the project, and we wish to enlist our readers in its behalf. By the small endeavours of many, such a collection may be made in the course of a few years as will supply a want under which architecture in this country has long laboured.

THE PAINTED WINDOWS ST. GUDULE'S, BRUSSELS.

PRINCIPLES OF GLASS PAINTING.

May I beg the favour of a place in the columns of your excellent journal for the following remarks, chiefly descriptive—on the painted windows in St. Gudule's, Brussels, which were the subject of a difference of opinion some weeks ago, between one of your correspondents and myself in the pages of The Builder? I may add that I have just visited them in returning from Germany, and that the remarks I send you were made on the spot.

The four windows in the side of the Chapel of the Miraculous Sacrament (which were those alluded to) date from 1540, and contain each two groups. The lower range consists of portraits of kings of Portugal and Hungary, Francis I. and an Emperor Ferdinand, with their queens, in kneeling attitudes, attended by their patron saints. The upper range are subjects of divers character; the groups are placed under open porches, or in colonnaded covered galleries, recalling a little some of the more decorative pictures of Veronese and Tintorette, or the allegorical pageants of Rubens. A fair and accessible illustration of the architectural treatment may be got from the monuments of Edward VI. Elizabeth, and Mary of Scotland, in Henry VII.'s Chapel, Westminster. Place one above another, filling the space between the pinnacles of the lower, and the base of the upper with panelling, and substituting the groups for the tombs and effigies, and you will have the arrangement, architectural and pictorial, of the windows in the Chapel of the Miraculous Sacrament at Brussels. The surfaces, however, are much enriched with figures and other decorations, and abundant, if not elaborate, detail.

The open ground within the architecture is filled in with considerable masses of pale blue of a lilac tone. There is no vestige of anything like a back-ground, so called,—neither tree, nor building, nor distant object—all flat pale blue. This ground has, I believe, been recently restored, as they say, in exact imitation of the old—that it is nearly like it there is no reason to doubt; but the old would be more broken in tint, for this is indeed *flat* to excess. The groups occupy something less than a third of the whole, exclusive of the tracery. The tracery and points of the openings above the canopies are filled in with white quarry-work, with some heraldry and spots of coloured decoration. The whole effect of the windows is bright and light, which goes far to redeem a very exceptionable character of design. The only part that can be said to have any power of shadow is the ceilings of the canopies, and there it is light in tint, but the extent and flatness make it noticeable as shadow. They are relieved a little by coloured festoons, pendants, and open ornaments. For the rest, shading is nowhere remarkable. The whole of the four, are as light, and even lighter, than late Perpendicular windows are generally, and, as compared with windows of their own date, I should say they are light to exception: white and yellow form at least three-fourths of the entire surface; and so little is contrast of colour a feature of them, that blue, only a tint or two deeper than the ground, is much used, and in large pieces against it; then cool purples, some warm light purples, some light greens, and ruby in small quantities. The ruby, where it is used, looks harsh, partly from its being rather dark in tint, but chiefly because the other colours are harmonized to a cool tone, and the red contrasts unpleasantly.

The drawing is very good, both of the figures and architecture,—I should say especially of the latter; the action of the figures and the expression good, too; the style of painting free, yet careful; the faces and hands are on white glass, slightly tinted. The third window from the transept is the best: the group of Francis I. and his Queen, with St. Francis D'Assise and St. Catherine behind, and the group above it, are conceived and executed in a good style: the figures are simply arranged and on a single plane, unless a figure kneeling, in front of another standing, can be called foreground and background.

And now, I would leave the whole in the hands of yourself and your readers, and would ask whether (the windows being such as I have described them, and the greatest favour any one could do me in this matter would be to examine them with this description in the hand,) I was not justified in saying, that these windows were incorrectly quoted in support of a system of glass painting whose characteristics were stated to be *complicated foreground groups, receding landscape backgrounds, and the strongest contrasts of colour and of light and shade!*

All is light and glassy, with the exception of the shaded ceilings which I have noticed, though even there the glass is not lost; still the shaded roof and the careful perspective give an appearance of positive recess, which I should fancy the most partial would allow to be highly injurious to the building at least: the effect being to lead the eye outside and at right angles from the altar in a narrow chapel, with the windows on one side only: this surely to any sensitive eye, cannot but be most distracting, and would have been avoided had the work been kept within those rules of low relief which are alone suitable to glass in its relation to architecture.

I could wish no more instructive lecture to a glass painter, whose judgment had been tolerably grounded by study of the fine works of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, than can be read in the windows of the choir of St. Gudule's. Let him begin at the north transept corner, and examine the windows I have described; then let him face about and look at the corresponding ones in the Lady Chapel opposite, those huge architectural monstrosities, and he will have seen the germ and the tree—the first introduction of false taste, and the rank magnitude of its full-blown excrescence. Those in the chapel of the Miraculous Sacrament have a silvery brilliance and sweetness of effect which, in spite of the preponderance of the architectural accompaniment, stamps them genuine and fine windows: but the recessed roofs and elaborate perspective show clearly the rock on which the opposite artist has split, who, in the Lady Chapel, goes off amain, thrusts up enormous piles of opaque building and columns that make the cathedral itself look fragile and slight: despising balance, he aims at being striking and picturesque, sends off receding terraces and mighty ascending steps, settles his groups into corners, with huge rolling masses of shadow measurable by square yards. Here, indeed, force of shadow has been tried with astounding success—there is scarcely a piece of clear glass or of pot-metal colour in all the four; but those who can admire such things in glass must be left to themselves, for it is impossible in looking at them to command patience enough to be critical.

These are said to have been designed by a pupil of Rubens, and have internal evidence sufficient to prove them of his school, but they are so entirely bad as glass, that I would not have mentioned them here were it not to

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